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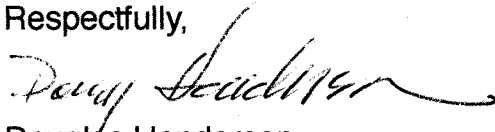
To Chairman Harry Klock, Vice Chairman Keith Regier, Vice Chairman Robyn Driscoll and Committee Members: Carlie Boland, Douglas Kary, James Knox, Austin Knudsen, Gary MacLaren, Mary McNally, Mike Menahan, Jesse O'Hara, Ken Peterson, Mike Phillips, Derek Skees, Sterling Small, and Wayne Stahl,

Regarding House Bill 198, I think it is a mistake to make significant alternations in eminent domain law to address a single current dispute between landowners and a foreign business interest. The alterations will then have application in all future projects in the state. The consequences to private property rights, land use, property values, conservation, to the course and heightened scrutiny of DEQ activities, as well as to more reliance on the courts at earlier stages of project development, will be with us into the future for generations.

I remember witnessing the haste of a past Montana legislature allowing Montana Power Company to ultimately immolate itself. Are we going to go through this again through poorly examined power--granting license to corporate interests to play boardwalk with Montanans and the Montana landscape? Why do the Republicans, who generally rail against the power of the state, move to gift further fiat and private acquisition to government and intrusive business entities, as if air rushing to fill a vacuum?

Who do our representatives in the state legislature imagine they are working for?

Respectfully,



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